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CBC Newsletter

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For members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., Ornithological Society of the Carolinas

Volume 55 December 2009 Number 6

Winter 2010 Meeting at Atlantic Beach, NC

John Fussell & Lena Gallitano

A winter trip to the beach promises a chance to see many of our traditional wintering birds, but also holds the lure of a possible rare species. This year's winter meeting is no exception, as participants and leaders alike sort through shorebirds, gulls, terns, loons, sparrows, waterfowl, and others searching for that rarity. Perhaps a new North Carolina record or a life bird? Join us January 29-31, 2010 at Atlantic Beach for some great winter birding on our barrier islands, marshes, national forest and wildlife refuges. From Atlantic Beach to down east Carteret County, west to Swansboro and north to New Bern, we'll scour every nook and cranny of the area to discover as many species as possible.

Friday night plan on a social at the Sheraton to renew past acquaintances and meet others prior to hearing Rodney Kemp, a locally grown storyteller. Rodney will entertain us with tales and folklore drawn from the people and rich heritage of Carteret County. This evening of frivolity will be a treat for everyone, birder and non-birder alike. On Saturday, make plans to join fellow Club members for the now traditional group buffet dinner, speaker and countdown. The buffet will feature an Italian menu with vegetarian options among the choices. The price is $21/person, and sign-up is included on the enclosed registration form.

Our Saturday speaker is Lynn Barber, a past CBC member from Raleigh who now lives in Texas but is still well known in the Carolinas. The program entitled "Passionate Birder: Lynn Barber's ABA Big Year" will give Lynn a chance to relive her 2008 Big Year birding forays across America with us. We'll all be shaking our heads in amazement and wonder at the fortitude and focus of this passionate birder by the end of the evening.

Headquarters for the meeting will be the Sheraton Atlantic Beach Oceanfront Hotel, 2717 W. Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512. Their telephone number for reservations is 1-800-624-8875. From US 70 in Morehead City take the causeway to Atlantic Beach, turning right on SR 58. The Sheraton is 2.3 miles on the left. Room rates are $79 per night single or double occupancy, plus a 12.75% room tax. Be sure to mention you are with the CBC when making reservations. All rooms have a hair dryer, coffeemaker, and refrigerator. A lobby microwave is also available for guests. The rate does not include breakfast, however there is a restaurant in the hotel where you can purchase breakfast, and there are fast food alternatives available nearby. **Reservation deadline is December 29, 2009. Rooms and room rates cannot be guaranteed after this date, so be sure to reserve before the deadline.**

Those wishing to extend their time in the region and experience more of North Carolina's exciting birds will want to sign on for the bonus pelagic trip Wednesday, January 27 aboard the Stormy Petrel II with Captain Brian Patteson.

January in the warm waters of the Gulf Stream promises some nice birds that can make the week a truly exceptional one for anyone trying to get a head start on their 2010 list! On Thursday, plan to do some birding on your own or join with others on Ocracoke as you make your way by car and ferry to Cedar Island and Atlantic Beach for the weekend.

With participation limits on all field trips, like the early bird getting the worm, early registration will give you the best chance for your trips of choice, so make your plans now and we'll see you at Atlantic Beach!

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The CBC Funds Rusty Blackbird Research in Conestee, SC

Paul Serridge

Introduction:

The Rusty Blackbird is not a very prepossessing bird, either visually or vocally. Pete Dunne, in his *Essential Field Guide Companion*, describes it as: "A compact blackbird with a somewhat grackle-like bill and a penchant for keeping its feet wet. Slightly larger than a Red-winged Blackbird (and considerably smaller than Common Grackle) with a longish, slightly downturned, grackle-like bill and a shortish tail…(It) frequently stands in shallow water – a habitat shunned by most blackbirds."

"Rusty" refers to the brownish winter plumage when both sexes show rusty feather edging over much of their plumage. In winter the male has basically black plumage with rusty tips and a tawny eye-stripe. As the breeding plumage develops (entirely black with a dull metallic greenish sheen on the upperparts and slightly bluish on the crown) it can be quite iridescent, resulting in some rather startling and variable bluish coloration.

In winter the female has dark feathers tipped with rusty brown, a tawny eye-stripe and a buffy face. The breeding plumage of the female is basically gray on the back, face and underparts, with blackish wings and tail. Both sexes show a bright yellow eye. The immature is like the winter adult, but rustier overall.

Rusty Blackbirds are usually pretty silent through the end of January, which can make them rather hard to locate. A local birding friend told me that "they can really creep up on you." Then in February, when they start their rather non-musical song, they are easier to find.

Status and decline over time:

Rusty Blackbirds breed in wet temperate boreal wetland areas from northern New England and the Canadian Maritime provinces across Canada and into Alaska. They winter primarily in wooded wetland areas in the southeastern United States. According to the International Rusty Blackbird Technical Working Group: "The Rusty Blackbird is arguably the most ecologically specialized of the North American blackbirds, both in its feeding habits and habitat uses. Throughout the year this species feeds to a considerable extent on animal prey and is one of the few bird species restricted year-round to wooded wetlands".

A significant decline has been documented in recent decades. For example, North American Breeding Bird Surveys and Christmas Bird Counts indicate a decline of 85% - 98% in the past 40 years. The International Union for Conservation of Nature classified the Rusty Blackbird as a Vulnerable Species in 2007. This is in stark contrast to its earlier classification which was as a Species of Least Concern. On the Audubon Watchlist it is in the "yellow" category – species that are either declining or rare and typically of national conservation concern. The reasons for this dramatic decline are not well understood. Different hypotheses have been advanced such as:

- the loss of winter habitat as a result of the conversion of wetlands to agriculture;
- breeding habitat loss related to climate change and/or acid rain;
- mercury accumulation in tissue as a result of feeding on aquatic invertebrates and small fish;
- blackbird control programs;
- exposure to disease from other species as a result of using large mixed species nighttime roosts during the winter.

More research is needed to identify the main causes and to propose actions to reverse the decline. An important part of that research started in Conestee, SC in the early part of this year.

Rusty Blackbirds at Lake Conestee Nature Park

Rusty Blackbirds have been known to winter in the Conestee area for many years. A resident of Conestee told me that he has "lived in the same house for 67 years and the blackbirds have been coming to my yard as long as I can remember". However, reporting of Rusty Blackbirds in Conestee was not started in a systematic way until after the opening of Lake Conestee Nature Park (LCNP) in October of 2006. On November 26, 2006 Greenville County Bird Club (GCBC) members Hilda Reese and Jane Kramer reported "between 15 and 20 Rusty Blackbirds at LCNP". This

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attracted the attention of local birders, and the species has been reported at LCNP numerous times since then during the winter months. Reports start in mid to late November, typically peak in January/February, and then taper off in March with a few late birds in April.

Knowing the precarious situation of the Rusty Blackbird, I posted reports of large numbers of Rusty Blackbirds to the internet mail group Carolinabirds in late 2008 and early 2009.

In early January 2009 I received an e-mail from Nathan Dias asking if I could help researchers from the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Georgia (UGA) who might be interested in Conestee as a potential site for the study of wintering Rusty Blackbirds.

On January 12, 2009 I met with Patti Newell (a graduate student at UGA), Desiree Narango (a technician working with Patti) and Dr. Russell Greenberg, Director of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center in Washington, DC (and one of Patti's research advisors) for a short preliminary visit to LCNP. (Patti Newell, Nathan Dias, and Russell Greenberg are all members of the International Rusty Blackbird Technical Working Group.) We checked out four places in the park where, based on my records, there was a reasonable chance of finding Rusty Blackbirds. After a frustrating hour or so of lack of Rusties, we spotted a rather large flock, estimated at 250–300 birds, foraging at the far edge of the lake. That certainly got the researchers excited, and they all came back for a prolonged visit a couple of days later.

Late in the afternoon of January 15, I guided Patti and Desiree to an area of the park which is not yet open to the general public (the Forrester Farm tract) and we struck "Rusty gold"! We observed a very large flock (estimated at 700 – 1000 individuals) feeding at the edge of the lake. After a while the birds left the feeding area and flew towards Conestee village. By following the flight of the birds, the researchers found that they were feeding in residential yards where there are pecan trees. The Rusties pick fallen pecans off the ground, the smart ones going for the pecans which have fallen on the road surface and been broken open by passing cars. Visits to the residential area over the next couple of days were sufficient for the researchers to decide that that it would be the most favorable place to trap Rusty Blackbirds for measurement, banding and blood and feather sampling. Local residents were very cooperative and allowed the researchers to put up mist nets in their yards.

Between January and March 2009 Patti Newell banded 120 birds in Conestee. (Several birds were caught in the nets on more than one occasion.)
The researchers, assisted by several members of the GCBC, observed that the Rusty Blackbirds were arriving soon after dawn to feed on the pecans. The birds then moved to different spots in LCNP, less than a quarter of a mile away, to feed in the mud and leaves at the edges of the lake and in the shallow wetlands. They have several times been observed foraging there in flocks of several hundred birds. The flocks of Rusties appear to keep themselves physically separated from the flocks of grackles while foraging.

In the late afternoon the Rusty Blackbirds typically return to the trees around the yards in Conestee village and then, towards dusk, they fly off in large flocks. The researchers followed a flock one evening and located the night roosting area about four miles from Conestee. The property where the birds roost (in mixed flocks with other species) is owned by the Greater Greenville Sanitation Commission (GGSC). Managers of the GGSC have confirmed that the roost area, largely consisting of dense Loblolly Pines, is being protected and conserved as natural habitat.

Based on the success of this first winter study, researcher Patti Newell has decided to focus her research activities on Rusty Blackbirds in Conestee. She considers that, although Rusty Blackbirds are found throughout the Carolinas in the winter, the system at Conestee, (the LCNP together with the nearby residential area and the nighttime roost site) could potentially host the highest population of Rusty Blackbirds east of the Appalachians.

Active research will start again in December when the Rusty Blackbirds will have returned to Conestee in sufficient numbers to justify mist-netting.

The Carolina Bird Club has awarded Patti Newell a research grant of $2,000 to help in the funding of her work. The overall goal of that work is to determine if

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Rusty Blackbirds

(Continued from page 3)

the proximity of a source of tree mast (pecans) and shallow wetlands is the reason that the abundance of Rusty Blackbirds is so high. She has committed to making a presentation of that work at a future CBC meeting.

Based primarily on the park's large winter population of Rusty Blackbirds, the author submitted nomination forms and a lot of additional information to Audubon South Carolina proposing that LCNP be considered as an Important Bird Area. Taylor Piephoff, CBC President, sent a letter on behalf of the CBC supporting the nomination. On September 30, 2009 the IBA Technical Committee unanimously voted to accept Lake Conestee Nature Park as South Carolina's newest Important Bird Area.

Read The Chat and the Newsletter anywhere you have Internet access!

The most recent editions of the Newsletter and The Chat are online at the CBC website. Older editions of The Chat are free for anyone to download, but the CBC Newsletter and the two most recent calendar years of The Chat are available only to CBC members. All CBC members will use the same username and password to access these publications. The username is "**member**" and the password is "**birdfun**".

This is a membership benefit, please don't share the password with non-members! The password will be changed from time to time, but can always be found in the most recent print edition of the Newsletter. Go to http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/newsletter to access the Newsletter, and http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/chat to access The Chat.

Notice of Proposed Dues Increase

After discussion at its Annual Planning Retreat, the CBC Executive Committee recommended that an annual dues increase of five dollars to Individual Memberships, Sustaining Memberships, and Business Memberships was necessary to maintain the current high level of programs and service the Club offers its members. The Club has not seen an increase in yearly dues since 1999.

Increased revenues will ensure that quality seasonal meetings will continue to be staged for the membership, and that the quality of Club publications, the Chat and Newsletter, will be maintained. The proposed increase would take effect after the next seasonal meeting (Atlantic Beach, NC Jan. 29-31, 2010) at which the Executive Committee will present the following recommended dues schedule to the membership as is required by Club by-laws:

Article II Section 4 of the by-laws of the Carolina Bird Club states:

"***The dues schedule (the frequency and amounts to be collected) shall be established by the Executive Committee and approved by the membership. A notice through the Newsletter of proposed changes in dues schedules shall be provided the membership prior to the meeting for which action is contemplated."***

Recommended Dues Schedule to be approved at Winter 2010 meeting:

- Individual or non-profit: $25
- Associate (in household with individual): $5
- Student: $15
- Sustaining (open to businesses): $30
- Life Membership: $400
- Associate Life Membership: $100

In addition, the Executive Committee has enacted a five dollar increase in meeting registration fees, beginning with registration for the Winter 2010 Atlantic Beach Meeting. An increase in seasonal meeting registration fees has not occurred since 2004.

Atlantic Beach Meeting Field Trip Schedule

Wednesday, January 27

Bonus Pelagic Trip from Hatteras, NC – 6:00 AM

Friday, January 29

Morning Half-Day Trips

Trip 1 - Bogue Banks - Mid-island Marshes & Maritime Forest – 7:15 AM
Trip 2 - Fort Macon State Park – 7:15 AM
Trip 3 - Calico Creek Boardwalk – 7:30 AM
Trip 4 - Cedar Point Tideland Trail & Emerald Isle Woods – 7:30 AM

Afternoon Half-Day Trips

Trip 5 - Rachel Carson National Estuarine Research Reserve – 12:30 PM
Trip 6 - North River Farms – 12:30 PM
Trip 7 - Fort Macon State Park – 1:00 PM
Trip 8 - Taste of the Croatan N.F. – 1:00 PM

All Day Trips

Trip 9 - Cape Lookout & Harkers Island Nature Trail – 7:00 AM
Trip 10 - The Real Down East – 7:00 AM
Trip 11 - Hammocks Beach State Park – 7:00 AM
Trip 12 - Exploring the Croatan N.F. – 7:45 AM

Saturday, January 30

Morning Half-Day Trips

Trip 13 - Rachel Carson National Estuarine Research Reserve – 7:15 AM
Trip 14 – North River Farms – 7:15 AM
Trip 15 - Cedar Point Tideland Trail & Emerald Isle Woods – 7:30 AM
Trip 16 - Taste of the Croatan National Forest – 7:30 AM

Afternoon Half-Day Trips

Trip 17 - Rachel Carson National Estuarine Research Reserve – 12:30 PM
Trip 18 - Calico Creek Boardwalk – 12:30 PM
Trip 19 - Bogue Banks - Mid-island Marshes & Maritime Forest – 1:00 PM
Trip 20 - Fort Macon State Park – 1:00 PM

All Day Trips

Trip 21 - Cape Lookout & Harkers Island Nature Trail – 7:00 AM
Trip 22 - The Real Down East – 7:00 AM
Trip 23 - Hammocks Beach State Park – 7:00 AM
Trip 24 - Exploring the Croatan National Forest – 7:45 AM

Essential Planning Notes for the Atlantic Beach Meeting!

- Many of the planned trips are to sites on the NC Birding Trail (NCBT) and the site numbers are noted at the beginning of each trip description. Check the NCBT – Coastal Guide or the NCBT website www.ncbirdingtrail.org for additional site information.
- Come prepared for all weather circumstances! Bring boots, rain gear, hats, gloves and layers for warmth that can be shed if we luck out with beautiful warm sunny days we often see in January. Do remember, however, that our coastal breezes can put a chill in the air even when the sun is out. Pay careful attention to the clothing cautions for trips involving boats.
- To accommodate boats and tides, some trips depart at unusual times – read carefully!
- Plan to bring food for the all-day trips since some are in areas without food service (but perhaps you'll find a local eatery with the best clam chowder on the coast right at lunch time!) Even the half-day trips are tightly scheduled, so be prepared with your own food in case time does not allow a restaurant stop between trips.
- All trips will have toilet facilities at some point on the trip unless noted otherwise but remember many of these sites are in remote areas so plan accordingly.
- All field trips have a participation limit of 15 unless otherwise noted, so register early to be sure you get your trips of choice.
- All trips will leave from the hotel but may meet the trip leader at the site – one person will be asked to guide to the appropriate location. Details will be provided at registration.

Winter Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

Trips 1, 19: Bogue Banks - Mid-island Marshes & Maritime Forest — NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores, Roosevelt & Hoop Pole Creek Natural Areas (NCBT – East Carteret Group – Sites 1 & 2)
The Aquarium and Roosevelt State Natural Area provide two walks of interest. The Roosevelt Nature Trail passes through maritime forest and dunes as it winds west toward Bogue Sound. This 265-acre maritime forest is one of the few remaining expanses of maritime forest on North Carolina's barrier islands. The 0.5-mile Alice Hoffman Nature Trail, which leaves from behind the Aquarium, extends east in the opposite direction and passes along the marsh edge, before entering a forested area. One trail spur extends out to a brackish pond. From the Aquarium, continue on to the 0.5 mile Hoop Pole Creek trail that follows the creek out to Bogue Sound, passing through maritime forest for much of the walk but ending with views of coastal salt marsh. The interpretive trail guide gives information about a number of plant species associated with this type of habitat. On each of these trails, a variety of songbirds may be found in the wooded areas including Hermit Thrush, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Gray Catbird. Scan the creek and marsh areas for Northern Harrier, Marsh Wren, wading birds, and rails.

Trips 2, 7, 20: Fort Macon State Park
(NCBT – East Carteret Group – Site 3)
Fort Macon offers opportunities to view a variety of shorebirds, ocean birds and waterfowl. Winter can be an especially good season to bird here. Walk the beach in a wide arc from the sound side around to the south-facing beach. As the shoreline swings east, it parallels Beaufort Inlet, with views of Shackleford Banks. Watch for loons, Red-breasted Merganser, and waterfowl in the near shore waters. The occasional Harlequin Duck, Common Eider, or alcid species may be found in the rough surf around the jetty at the southwest corner of the point; look for Purple Sandpiper on the jetty rocks. Scan the horizon for passing gannets, scoters and possibly a jaeger. At high tide when the weather is bad, small flocks of shorebirds may congregate here; these may include a couple of Wilson's Plovers. Walk over to the fort and the surrounding forest and shrub areas to look for songbirds. Spotting scopes are useful for ocean scanning. Wear appropriate footwear for beach walking and deep sand.

Trips 3, 18: Calico Creek Boardwalk
(NCBT – East Carteret Group – Site 4)
Calico Creek is a nice spot for birding, considering its relatively urban location in Morehead City. The best birding opportunities are at low tide, and this trip is scheduled accordingly. Walking along the boardwalk, look for migrating shorebirds and wintering waterfowl including Green-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, and Bufflehead. Keep an eye out for the occasional glimpse of a Clapper Rail amongst the marsh grass. Other opportunities to view the creek are at the ends of 17, 13, 11, and 7th streets in Morehead City and may be explored as time allows. No toilet facilities.

Trips 4, 15: Cedar Point Tideland Trail & Emerald Isle Woods
(NCBT – Onslow Bight Group – Sites 3 & 4)
The Cedar Point Tideland Trail provides opportunities to view salt marsh and upland pine/hardwood associated bird species. A combination of raised boardwalks and paths cross the marsh and pine/hardwood communities as the trail winds along the edge of the White Oak River estuary. Snags throughout the area offer good chances to view woodpecker species, including Red-headed Woodpecker. One short dead-end spur provides a nice view of the tidal marsh, with opportunities to view herons, egrets, and Osprey. Continue on to Emerald Isle Woods, on the south shore of Bogue Sound where trails wind through both pine woodlands and maritime forest interspersed with several small wetlands which may have Wood Duck. A raised wooden boardwalk snakes across ancient dunes and offers views of Bogue Sound and the Intra-coastal Waterway. Extending across broad tidal wetlands, the boardwalk leads to a floating dock. Scan the wetlands and shoreline area for terns, shorebirds, wading birds, and wintering waterfowl.

Trips 5, 13, 17: Rachel Carson National Estuarine Research Reserve
(NCBT – East Carteret Group – Site 5)
The Rachel Carson site is a complex of islands across Taylor's Creek from the Beaufort waterfront. The islands at the western end of the site - Carrot Island,

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Winter Meeting Field Trip Descriptions (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

Town Marsh, Bird Shoal, and Horse Island - are more than three miles long and less than a mile wide, covering 2,025 acres. The site is an important wintering area for Piping Plovers, and occasionally one or two Wilson's Plovers may overwinter as well. A loop trail across the island covers a small beach, the western end of Town Marsh, follows along Taylor's Creek, then heads through a salt marsh and a break in the shrub thicket to the top of a sand berm for views of Beaufort Inlet, Shackleford Banks and mud flats. Time will be spent exploring the mud flats where a wide variety of shorebirds often can be seen probing the mud, including Ruddy Turnstone, Willet, Short-billed Dowitcher, Sanderling and possibly a Long-billed Curlew. A spotting scope will be useful for scanning. Wear boots suitable for wading in ankle deep water. No toilet facilities on the Reserve.

Cost $13, pay at ferry. Plan to jump from the ferry into the soft sand of the beach to disembark.

Trips 6, 14: North River Farms

This privately owned land is typically quite birdy. Participants will look for raptors including Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon and Merlin as well as other open country birds, a variety of sparrows, and maybe a few marsh birds. Rarities turn up at this site occasionally. No toilet facilities.

Trips 8, 16: Taste of the Croatan National Forest Millis & Pringle Roads & Patsy Pond

(NCBT – Onslow Bight Group – Sites 1 & 2)

Millis and Pringle Roads present some of the best birding opportunities in the southern portion of the Croatan National Forest. Participants will drive the dirt roads making frequent stops for birding. With recent burning in the area, there is the possibility for both Bachman's and Henslow's Sparrow. A short 0.5 mile hike along a forest service road leads back to the headwaters of a tributary of the Newport River for forest species. The Millis Road Savanna makes this road especially appealing. Red-cockaded Woodpecker can be found here year round and a walking trail leads past several cavity trees. Other birds that might be seen include Red-headed Woodpecker and Brown-headed Nuthatch. Continue on at the Patsy Pond Nature Trail which winds through an open woodland of longleaf pine forest where Red-cockaded Woodpecker can be found along with Wild Turkey, Red-headed Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Pine Warbler and other species. No toilets available.

Trips 9, 21: Cape Lookout & Harkers Island Nature Trail

(NCBT – East Carteret Group – Sites 6 & 7)

Cape Lookout, on Core Banks, is the southern tip of a natural barrier island accessible only by boat. The point of the island includes extensive dune systems that stretch three miles south of the lighthouse and then northwest to a dramatic hook. Participants will take a ferry across to the lighthouse and then hike to the point while scanning the ocean for pelagic species as well as exploring the beach, dunes and sound side marshes for other species. This out and back trip will allow participants flexibility in the distance they chose to walk. Returning to the mainland, the ferry will swing by Shackleford Banks in hopes of seeing Long-billed Curlew and Reddish Egret, specialties occasionally seen at this location. After returning from Cape Lookout, participants will take a quick visit to the Harkers Island Nature Trail. This trail leads through pine stands and maritime forest for a chance to see songbirds, and the salt marsh may provide additional species of wintering waterfowl. With many diverse habitats, this challenging trip is sure to hold some surprises for the intrepid explorer!

Cost $20, pay at ferry. Be prepared for salt spray and low wind chill values. To reach the point, plan to walk about three miles through sand. Shallow water may be encountered to fully explore the point and sound side marshes. Bring food and water. A spotting scope will be useful for scanning the ocean. Limited toilet facilities are available between the lighthouse and the point.

Trips 10, 22: The Real Down East

Local stops along NC 12 and Cedar Island NWR

(NCBT – East Carteret Group – Site 8)

This easy tour of various habitats in the scenic Down East area of Carteret County will end at the Cedar Island ferry terminal. Among other locations, it will include Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge, which

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Winter Meeting Field Trip Descriptions (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

consists of approximately 11,000 acres of brackish marsh and 3,480 acres of woodland habitat. Dirt roads and firebreaks provide visual access to the marsh and woodlands, as well as the bays and sound. The firebreaks serve as walking trails. The marsh and estuary provide wintering habitat for thousands of ducks. Raptors can be seen hunting over the marsh, and songbirds are viewed along the fringe habitats and uplands. On rare occasion, elusive rails may be spotted in the marsh grasses along with Marsh and Sedge Wren. Limited and sporadic toilet facilities.

Trips 11, 23: Hammocks Beach State Park
A venture to Bear Island in Hammocks Beach State Park provides a unique opportunity to explore one of the most unspoiled and uninhabited barrier islands on the coast. Participants will take a ferry to the island from the mainland visitor center. The ride provides great views of marsh habitats, wading birds and shorebirds, especially at low tide. If lucky, an overwintering Painted Bunting may be seen near the boat dock on the island and the walk across the island to the ocean side will provide chances to locate birds in the beach and dune habitats. Once on the ocean side, participants will walk about 1.5 miles to Bogue Inlet to search for wintering shorebirds and wading birds. The deck of the closed bathhouse will provide a nice elevated location for scanning the ocean for seabirds. **Cost $10, pay at ferry. Be prepared for salt spray and low wind chill values. To reach the inlet, plan to walk about 1.5 miles through sand. Bring food and water. A spotting scope will be useful for ocean scanning. No toilet facilities are available.**

Trips 12, 24: Exploring the Croatan National Forest
(NCBT – Onslow Bight Group – Sites 3 & 4; Lower Neuse Group – Site 2)
This trip will explore the Patsy Pond Nature Trail, Millis and Pringle Roads as described in Trips 8 and 16 in addition to various lakes, ponds and the Neuse River estuary for a variety of waterfowl. At the northern outskirt of the Croatan, Island Creek Forest Walk will provide a short hike within mature hardwood and pine habitats along the creek where outcrops of coquina limestone make for a very rich site and adds to the plant and bird diversity. Look for Brown Creeper and Winter Wren as well as the potential for an occasional wintering Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch or Pine Siskin. Limited and sporadic toilet facilities.

Bonus Trip from Hatteras, NC
Wednesday January 27, 6:00 A.M.
Join a Seabirding Pelagic Trip with Captain Brian Patteson. Brian's trips aboard the *Stormy Petrel II* are no secret to Carolina birders, and this is a great opportunity to check out our offshore waters for winter visitors. Brian will share his knowledge and skills with CBC members on this trip in hopes of finding some of our special winter visitors that could include Northern Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Red Phalarope, Great Skua, Black-legged Kittiwake, Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill and Dovekie among others. The "up close and personal" sights and sounds of Northern Gannets are another highlight of this trip. The trip is offered to a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 CBC members for a discounted price of $150. In the event of cancellation due to weather, participants will receive a full refund. For additional lodging information and general details about pelagic birding, check the Seabirding website: http://www.patteson.com/.

To sign up for the bonus pelagic trip, mark the appropriate box on the registration form on page 9 and **remit a separate check for $150 made payable to Seabirding Pelagic Trips.** Individuals registering for both the pelagic trip and the winter meeting should remit two checks, one for trip registration(s)/buffet(s) made payable to the CBC, and one for the pelagic trip made payable to Seabirding. Be sure to include your e-mail address on the registration form as additional information will be sent to you closer to the date of departure.

The opinions expressed in the CBC Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Carolina Bird Club or its members, but are those of the authors who have contributed material. All CBC members are encouraged to submit content for publication. Submitted articles may be edited for style, content, or length prior to publication. Submissions may be made in electronic format to newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org, or by mail to the address on the back cover.

CBC Winter Meeting, Field Trip, and Bonus Trip Registration Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening phone _____

Email _____

Winter 2010 Meeting

Meeting Registration (Member) ____ x $20 = $ _____
Meeting Registration (Non-member) ____ x $25 = $ _____
Saturday Buffet Dinner (each) ____ x $21 = $ _____
Bonus Pelagic Trip (each) ____ x $150= $ _____

Total Enclosed = $_____

Field Trip Sign-Up	A.M. 1st/2nd Choice	P.M. 1st/2nd Choice	All Day 1st/2nd Choice
Friday	/	/	/
Saturday	/	/	/

*To pre-register for field trips, place the trip number(s) in the boxes above.

Club policy requires all field trip participants to comply with the field trip leader's assessment and requests concerning the physical ability of each participant to make or complete the trip. Meeting registration at the door costs $30.

I release and discharge (and will not make a claim against) Carolina Bird Club for injury, death, or property damage arising from my participation at this meeting and/or Club field trips. This release of liability is entered into on behalf of all members of my family, including all minors accompanying me. I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of any such minors and that I am over 18 years of age.

Signature_____Date_____Signature_____Date_____

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send to: CBC, 353 Montabello, Bloomingdale, IL 60108

☐ Please update my address or other contact information as listed above

Welcome New Members!

The CBC warmly welcomes the following new members:

John Connors
Raleigh, NC

Gypsy Flores
Asheville, NC

David, William, Daniel Hueholt
Wilmington, NC

Nora Livingston
Asheville, NC

Jim Moore
Florence, SC

Don Mullaney
Beech Mountain, NC

Debra Segal
Gainesville, FL

Marilyn Shuping
Pfafftown, NC

John Sowerby
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Schomberg, Ontario
Canada

Paris Sterling
Rolesville, NC

Michael Stewart
Columbia, SC

Wezil Walraven
Bird Tours
Swannanoa, NC

Lynne Mattocks Lucas

Carolina Christmas Bird Count Information

It's not too early to begin making plans to participate in one or more Christmas Bird Counts in the Carolinas. To help you get started, the dates and contact persons for some of the many opportunities in North and South Carolina are listed below. Christmas Bird Counts are an excellent chance to join fellow birders of all experience levels, and allow you to participate in a tradition that dates back to 1900! The 2009-2010 season marks the 110th edition of the now-famous count that was started by ornithologist Frank Chapman as a conservation-related alternative to the traditional "side hunt" where participants would compete to see who could shoot the most quarry in a given day. Chapman devised a "competition" where folks would try to see how many living birds could be counted on Christmas Day. Now spanning several weeks from early December to early January, more than 50,000 observers participate in Christmas Bird Counts each year. The resulting body of data contributes to one of the largest and longest lasting "citizen science" projects in the world.

At the time of publication dates and contact persons for the counts below had been confirmed. Updates, hopefully to include information on many more of the counts scheduled in North and South Carolina, can be found on the web at the Carolina Bird Club site: www.carolinabirdclub.org Note that most counts require participants to pay a nominal fee charged by the National Audubon Society for record keeping and administrative tasks related to the counts.

Count	State	Date	Contact	Contact Phone	Contact E-mail Address
Hanging Rock State Park	NC	12/16/2009	Phil Dickinson	336-659-2464	pdickins@triad.rr.com
Winyah Bay	SC	12/17/2009	Lex Glover	803-465-0399	GloverL@dnr.sc.gov
Tryon	NC	12/19/2009	Simon Thompson	828-253-4247	travel@birdventures.com
New River	NC	12/19/2009	Katherine Higgins	276-768-8619	kathwrens@gmail.com
Augusta	SC	12/19/2009	Anne Waters	706-793-2788	birdannelady@earthlink.net
Greensboro	NC	12/19/2009	Elizabeth Link	336-273-4672	elzlink@yahoo.com
Kitty Hawk	NC	12/19/2009	Jeff Lewis		jlewis_obx@yahoo.com
York-Rock Hill	SC	12/19/2009	Bill Hilton, Jr.	803-684-5852	research@hiltonpond.org
Gastonia	NC	12/19/2009	Steve Tracy	704-853-0654	stevepath1@aol.com
Raleigh	NC	12/19/2009	John Connors	919-733-7450 x602	John.Connors@ncmail.net
Raven Rock S.P.	NC	12/19/2009	Erik Thomas	919-880-7809	erthomas@gw.ncsu.edu
Morehead City	NC	12/20/2009	John Fussell	252-240-1046	jfuss@clis.com
Congaree Swamp	SC	12/20/2009	John Grego	803-331-3366	jrgrego@mindspring.com
Durham	NC	12/20/2009	Jeff Pippen	919-383-8040	jspippen@duke.edu
Hilton Head Island	SC	12/20/2009	Barry Lowes	843-671-3537	
Southern Lake Norman	NC	12/20/2009	Taylor Piephoff	704-432-1391	Zachary. piephoff@mecklenburgcountync. gov
Southern Pines	NC	12/20/2009	Susan Campbell	910-949-3207	susan@ncaves.com
Pee Dee Area	SC	12/20/2009	David McLean	843-853-7084	dcmclean@gmail.com
Buncombe County	NC	12/20/2009	Marilyn Westphal	828-251-6864	mjwestph@unca.edu
Catawba Valley	NC	12/23/2009	Dwayne Martin	828-234-6041	redxbill@gmail.com

Carolina Christmas Bird Count Information (continued)

Count	State	Date	Contact	Contact Phone	Contact E-mail Address
Aiken	SC	12/24/2009	Calvin Zippler	803-642-2264	zipplerc@bellsouth.net
Santee N.W.R.	SC	12/26/2009	Dennis Forsythe	843-795-3996	dennis.forsythe@gmail.com
Charlotte	NC	12/26/2009	Ken Kneidel	704-365-5609	kendel2@earthlink.net
Chapel Hill	NC	12/27/2009	Will Cook	919-382-9134	cwcook@duke.edu
Cape Hatteras	NC	12/27/2009	Patricia Moore	252-995-4777	topatneal@aol.com
Bodie-Pea Island	NC	12/28/2009	Paul Sykes	706-769-9436	jjsykes@charter.net
Mattamuskeet N.W.R.	NC	12/29/2009	Allen Bryan	804-740-8953	nshrike@mail.com
Spartanburg	SC	12/30/2009	Lyle Campbell	864-585-1228	lcampbell@uscupstate.edu
Litchfield-Pawleys Island	SC	12/30/2009	Chris Hill	843-234-1810	chill@coastal.edu
Alligator River N.W.R.	NC	12/30/2009	Jeff Lewis		jlewis_obx@yahoo.com
Pinewood	SC	12/31/2009	Lex Glover	803-465-0399	GloverL@dnr.sc.gov
Roanoke Rapids	NC	1/2/2010	Fred Lobdell	252-257-2487	fplobdell@embarqmail.com
Pee Dee N.W.R.	NC	1/2/2010	Don Fink	704-796-1479	donfink48@aol.com
Savannah, GA-SC	SC	1/2/2010	Dorothy Bambach	912-598-3764	dotbam@bellsouth.net
Stone Mountain	NC	1/2/2010	Guy McGrane	336-973-8343	badgerboy@wilkes.net
Winston-Salem	NC	1/2/2010	John Haire	336-671-5577	johnhaire@starpower.net
North Greenville	SC	1/2/2010	J.B. Hines	864-461-8824	jbhines3@chesnet.net
Wilmington	NC	1/2/2010	Sam Cooper	910-799-3825	dmcooper2@juno.com
Greenville	NC	1/3/2010	Dr. Veronica Pantelidis	252-758-7828	pantelidisv@ecu.edu
Jordan Lake	NC	1/3/2010	Carol Williamson	919-383-2364	cncbrdr@yahoo.com
Southport-Bald Head-Oak Is.	NC	1/3/2010	Melinda Jones	206-383-0708	fremontinn@aol.com
Henderson County	NC	1/3/2010	Wayne Forsythe	828-697-6628	wforsythe@morrisbb.net
Charleston	SC	1/3/2010	Jennifer McCarthey Tyrrell		jmccarthey23@gmail.com
Falls Lake	NC	1/4/2010	Brian Bockhahn	919-676-1027	cbockhahn4@earthlink.net
Grandfather Mountain	NC	1/4/2010	Curtis Smalling	828-265-0198	csmalling@audubon.org
Kerr Lake	NC	1/5/2010	Brian Bockhahn	919-676-1027	cbockhahn4@earthlink.net

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Winston-Salem, NC April 30-May 2, 2010

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